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to the life from which they were taken to jail, it may be some time before they are reinfected. In the women treated for syphilis, we consider that about half so far advanced in the cure that reinfection may be possible. In the other fifty per cent of the cases, we are not so optimistic, and these women are considered to be in the latent tertiary stage. The amount of medication administered to them during their enforced hospitalization should, however, prevent any infectious lesions for a long time.

On the other hand, many of the girls, rid of the disease which may have prevented them from returning to a more decent mode of living, will not now be hindered by this cause, and will revert to domesticity without being a danger to all their associates.

The expense of such an undertaking seems large when first considered, but the end results warrant even greater expenditures of money. For each woman rendered noninfectious, a number of men are probably prevented from receiving an infection which takes years to cure and which they may pass to others. While the prostitute is in jail she should be treated with the most modern methods and drugs at our command, that in addition to the penal routine, she have her health restored.

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- From Herman Goodman, M. D., New York City; formerly Venereal Disease Officer, Camp Las Casas, Porto Rico. *Medical Record*, N. Y., March 20, 1920.

The Syphilitic Prostitute.—Dr. Herman Goodman reported in the Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico a special study made to answer the question, "At what age is the prostitute most dangerous?" He determined that 139 of the 791 girls were under 17 years of age; 42 per cent of this group

had three or four plus Wassermann reactions; 15 per cent of these young girls had active infectious syphilitic manifestations, such as chancre, mucous patch, or condylomata lata.

The age period from 18 to 22 gave 388 prostitutes, or about 48 per cent of the total studied. Of these 388, 193, or about 50 per cent, were strongly Wassermann positive, and 11 per cent had active genital lesions of syphilis.

One hundred and forty-seven girls were in the next age group, 23-27, of whom 45 per cent were serologically positive, and 11 per cent had dangerous syphilitic manifestations.

Only 64 women were in the age group of 28-32, and 43 per cent of these had three or four plus Wassermann reactions, but only four per cent were with active lesions.

Beyond 32 the number of women became much smaller, and the percentage of positive Wassermann reactions became much lower, while none showed any infectious manifestations.

In the series studies there were 422 whites, 304 mulattoes, and 65 negresses. Even with this disparity of numbers, the percentage of Wassermann positive cases was constant, about 47 per cent for each color. The ratio of active syphilitic cases, however, showed a marked difference. The whites gave 10 per cent, the mulatto 13 per cent, and the negress only 3 per cent with infectious syphilitic manifestations.

COURTS—LAWS

The Public Defender.—Society owes a duty to the "under dog." Its obligation is becoming more apparent in the various phases of human endeavor. In the wake of the great world crisis through which we have been passing, class and financial distinctions are disappearing. The masses of the people everywhere are clamoring for social and economic justice. One of the signs of unrest is the rapidly growing movement for a "square deal" in the courts. In this connection, the establishment of the office of public defender is being persistently urged. Throughout the United States and England, the demand for elemental justice is developing with an ever-increasing force. The public defense of indigents accused of crime is a necessary counterpart of public prosecution. A duty devolves upon the state to shield the innocent as well as to punish the guilty. Does the state at present discharge this obligation? Does it protect the weak as well as the strong? Are the scales of justice evenly balanced? If we answer these questions in the negative—and we must—the need for a change is readily seen.

If our so-called "presumption of innocence" and "equality before the law" are to be effective, the state must defend as well as prosecute accused persons, particularly those who are unable to protect themselves. Society as a whole does not presume the accused innocent—it presumes him guilty. All classes of accused persons, whether rich or poor, must be given equal opportunities, equal resources and equal rights. The ascertainment of the truth is the primary consideration in the trial of a case. Any plan which tends towards that result merits the serious thought of our citizens. The trial of an issue involving human life or liberty must cease to be an unequal contest between the powerful state on the one hand and a weak and helpless defendant on the other. A "battle of wits" between opposing counsel for partisan advantage is not the true conception of a criminal trial.